THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF LIFE IN FRANCE.

In the *Revue Scientifique* of December 24, 1892, V. Turquan has an interesting article upon the average length of life in France, in which he shows that the average is gradually increasing, both for males and for females.   If we take into consideration the total number of years actually lived, the increase in the average length of life may be partly explained by the diminution in the birth rate, a social phenomenon which has occasioned much discussion in the past few years.   The explanation of this statement is very simple; the more births there are in a certain determined population the more deaths there are of infants, and in consequence the average of years lived by the entire community is so much less.   If we suppose that the number of births is diminished, we may assume that the number of deaths of infants is also less; and, provided that the conditions of life remain the same, this diminished death rate among infants will result in an increased average length of life for the entire community.

In addition to this, however, the increase of the average length of life is affected by the number of old people in the community.   If this number grows each year the average length of life will also increase.

In this article Turquan has worked out the average length of life for males and females independently, and for both sexes, not only for the entire country, but also for each of the 87 departments in France.

Fifty years ago the average length of life in France was 32 or 33 years, but the average for the last 32 years is 38 years and 4 months for women; and 36 years and 2 months for men; and 37 years and 3 months for both sexes.   This average has increased sensibly during the last few years, and is now above 40 years.   This latter increase, Turquan asserts, is due to the effect of hygienic measures, and to the decline of the birth-rate.

The different sections of France show different averages, and, as might be expected, these are lowest where sanitation is poorest, and where births are most numerous.   These averages vary from 28 years and 1 month to 51 years.   The difference between the averages for men and women is greatest in the western part of the country. The reason given for this is that the male portion of the population is mostly composed of sailors or fishermen.

The following table shows the average length of life by periods : —

Period.		Average Length of Life.
1806–1810, ...	31 years	6 months.
1811–1815, ...	31 "	10 "
1816–1820, ...	31 "	10 "
1821–1825, ...	31 "	5 "
1826–1830, ...	32 "	5 "
1831–1835, ...	33 "	6 "
1836–1840, ...	34 "	11 "
1841–1845, ...	35 "	0 "
1846–1850, ...	36 "	0 "
1851–1855, ...	36 "	8 "
1856–1860, ...	36 "	4 "
1861–1865, ...	36 "	5 "
1866–1876, ...	37 "	3 "
1877–1886, ...	40 "	2 "

The following table also shows the effect of the increase in the length of life for males : —

From 1820–1830, for each 100 births there were in 20 years 59.5 living.
" 1831–1840, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   61.7   "
" 1841–1850, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   60.7   "
" 1851–1860, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   61.5   "
" 1861–1870, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   62.6   "
" 1871–1880, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   62.1   "
" 1881–1890, "   "   "   "   "   "   " "   "   63.0   "

The higher average for women is due to the fact that the mortality among male children is greater than among female children, and that more women live to an old age than do men.

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